DEBATE BROADCASTS SPUR SWARTHMORE; Twelve in Season of 35 and Public Speaking Contest Were Carried Over Air

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The New York Times April 11, 1937

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SWARTHMORE, Pa., April 10.-

The Swarthmore College Debate Board ended its forensic activities of the season last week when two Swarthmore speakers debated six colleges on the annual Spring vacation tour, which took them as far West as Chicago.

Representing Swarthmore on the Western debate trip, George Braden of Indianapolis and Eugene M. Lang of New York opposed teams from Akron University, Ohio; Ashland College, Ohio; Earlham College, Indiana; Notre Dame, the University of Chicago and De Paul University in Chicago.

"This has been one of the most successful seasons we have ever had," said Mr. Braden, chairman of the debate board, before the tour. "More interest has been shown in debating this year than ever before and we intend to make use of that fact next year."

For the first time Swarthmore has concentrated on radio debates this year, broadcasting twelve of them. Local stations in the Philadelphia area allotted an hour's radio time for these programs each week.

The debaters at Swarthmore take a voice test before they speak on a radio broadcast. Defects are corrected through special exercises.

Besides the weekly debates, the Swarthmore College Debate Board also broadcast a public speaking contest over radio Station KYW in the early part of the season. In this annual Delta Upsilon Prize Speaking Contest, each of four Swarthmore undergraduates gave a five-minute radio speech. The judges listened to the speeches in front of a radio on the campus, twenty miles from the station. Their decision was wired to the studios and the program ended with an announcement of the winners.

Through the year Swarthmore participated in thirty-five debates, twelve over the radio, eight in the Philadelphia area and fifteen on trips away from the college.

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The New York Times

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28, 1990

Letters

Eugene M. Lang

Refac and Patents

To the Editor:

"A 'White Knight' Draws Cries of 'Patent Blackmail'," by Edmund L. Andrews (Jan. 14), was a grossly distorted representation of Refac's business and entrepreneurial philosphy. The central theme, that Refac engages in "patent blackmail" and "manipulation of the law," is a totally unfair characterization of a company and management which have been honored many times by the Government for services to America's small businesses.

Refac was founded in 1932 to license the patents of inventors and small companies. In this activity, we have always operated as principals and at our own risk and expense. We have negotiated hundreds of licenses and joint ventures in the United States and abroad. When client patents were infringed, we have tried to negotiate licenses — usually successfully and without litigation. Indeed, much of Refac's current activity involves negotiating and administering diverse licenses that do not involve litigation. These licenses generate more than 60 percent of Refac's earnings.

Unfortunately, your article focussed on the controversial subject of our infringement actions against major corporations. Ironically, most clients represented in these actions came to Refac only after offering licenses to these same corporations who either ignored them or in effect responded, "Sue us!" This corporate attitude contrasts with published expressions of "crocodile indignation" when Refac does.

For Refac, the drama of litigation began in 1975 when Gordon Gould, after battling industry opposition since 1959, asked us to represent his claims as inventor of the laser. Concluding that Mr. Gould's claims had genuine merit, Refac, against all odds, accepted the challenge. It took until 1987 and some $4 million, but the courts finally validated every patent of Mr. Gould's. Despite vituperative reactions from the laser industry — analagous to quotations cited in your article — claims that in 1975 might have been labeled "all but worthless" now generate annual royalties in excess of $12 million.

Your article states that Refac concentrates on "obscure" and "all but worthless" patents. Almost all patents are obscure until they are conspicuously used or contested. However, any patent granted by the United States Patent Office has presumed validity unless and until a court decides otherwise. Narrowness of claims does not measure potential value. Absent due process, it is irresponsible to label patents categorically "all but worthless."

Refac accepts no licensing project — whether or not litigation is involved — unless intensive study provides convincing evidence of substatantial merit. But studies are not conclusive since, among other factors, patent validity can depend on interpretations of a word or phrase. Nevertheless, despite your article's dismal assessment of Refac's courtroom experience, victories have far outnumbered defeats. Moreover, pretrial settlements have reflected the persuasiveness of Refac's patent arguments. Large corporations are not intimadated by legal costs. They are influenced by Refac's